

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 11845 050853Z

ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 HEW-06 NSF-02 NAS-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 /033 W

-----104847 052325Z /61

R 050715Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9931

UNCLAS TOKYO 11845

OES/APT/BMP FOR WALSH

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO, JA

SUBJECT: RECOMBINANT DNA RESEARCH

REF: (A) TOKYO 10079; (B) TOKYO A-174; (C) TOKYO 6886

(D) STATE A-2648

1. MAJORITY OF JAPANESE SCIENTISTS INTERESTED IN GENETIC ENGINEERING ARE WAITING IMPATIENTLY TO RECEIVE OFFICIAL GOJ GUIDELINES ON RECOMBINANT DNA RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. FOLLOWING EUROPEAN AND U.S. EXAMPLES, JAPANESE SCIENTISTS HAVE VOLUNTARILY SUSPENDED ALL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THIS AREA. THEY ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT JAPAN MIGHT BE LEFT BEHIND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THIS OTHERWISE PROMISING R&D AREA.

2. FROM THE OUTSET, JAPAN HAS BEEN SLOW IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE. ALTHOUGH SCIENCE COUNCIL OF JAPAN (SCJ) RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ITS BASIC POLICY CALLING FOR VOLUNTARILY CONTROLLING RESEARCH INVOLVING RECOMBINANT DNA MOLECULES, FORMAL ADOPTION OF RESEARCH GUIDELINES BY SCJ IS NOT EXPECTED UNTIL AROUND NEXT OCTOBER.

3. SCJ'S APPROACH IS BASICALLY QUITE SIMILAR TO THAT OF NIH. IT CALLS FOR BANNING FOR THE TIME BEING ALL UNCLASSIFIED

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EXPERIMENTS WITH HIGH DEGREE OF RISK SUCH AS THOSE INVOLVING HUMAN AND ANIMAL VIRUS GENES AND FOR SETTING UP COMMITTEE TO MANAGE EXPERIMENTS WHICH ARE RELATIVELY SAFE. FURTHERMORE, SCJ CALLS FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO CONSTRUCT JOINT RESEARCH FACILITY WHERE ALL RECOMBINANT DNA RESEARCH WILL BE PERFORMED UNDER ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS.

4. UNLIKE IN U.S. AND EUROPE, WHERE GOVERNMENTS EXTEND SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE IN PREPARATION OF RESEARCH GUIDELINES AND IN CONDUCT OF RESEARCH, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE VERY LITTLE IN THIS RESPECT. JAPANESE SCIENTISTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE AFFILIATED WITH SCIENCE COUNCIL OF JAPAN, ARE DISCONTENTED WITH LUKEWARM ATTITUDE ON PART OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

5. IN A COUNTRY WHERE RESEARCH AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES RELATING TO UTILIZATION OF MICROORGANISMS ARE EXTENSIVE AND OF HIGH QUALITY, APPLICATION OF GENETIC ENGINEERING TO THIS AREA IS EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO INCREASED PRODUCTION OR USE OF ENZYMES, ANTIBIOTICS AND VARIETY OF FERMENTATION PRODUCTS. PRESSURES ON THE GOVERNMENT FROM BOTH UNIVERSITIES AND INDUSTRY TO ALLOW REGULATED GENETIC ENGINEERING RESEARCH TO PROCEED CAN BE EXPECTED TO INTENSIFY.  
MANSFIELD

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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